



FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE
HONG KONG BUREAU

MHK-0025
5 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS
THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group
SUBJECT : Hong Kong Bureau Monthly Report for February 1981

I. OPERATIONS

1. Cruising Survey: Okinawa Bureau cruising monitor conducted a reception survey from 7-22 February to check out the bureau's remote antennas. The initial conclusions provided "few surprises," but the survey confirmed earlier Hong Kong reports that "the new antenna site had improved reception of some PRC regionals, as well as some other stations." A full report on the survey is in progress.

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2. Communications Upgrade: The bureau has requested, with headquarters and local concurrence, that the speed of our communications system be increased from 75 to 150 baud. Aside from improving wireroom and editorial efficiency, the increase conceivably could enable us to do away with the midnight shift, since one of the major reasons for the shift is the length of time it would take to clear overnight incoming traffic at the present 75-baud speed. Eliminating the "graveshift" would also go a long way toward improving the working conditions of our teletypists, and thus help offset the growing advantage lately enjoyed by Hong Kong private industry in recruiting and keeping good communicators.

3. PRC Television Coverage: We are experimenting with direct monitoring of PRC television, something which we were unable to do in St. John's building. At present, Cable and Wireless records the videotapes for us and makes them available for processing the day after broadcast. We have encountered some technical problems in making the recordings ourselves, but the problems seem soluble. In-house recording would save about 17 thousand dollars per year.

4. XINHUA Coverage: We have continued to try and stay abreast of XINHUA's plans to institute a new facsimile system and possible plans to expand transmissions by satellite. The latest information is that, in addition to satellite transmissions to Hong Kong--which have been occurring for some time--XINHUA intends to maintain its radio teletype transmissions for the foreseeable future.

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Plans are also moving ahead to introduce a new facsimile system of Japanese manufacture. We hope to subscribe to the service as soon as it becomes available, both for informational purposes and to provide a backstop for Okinawa.

5. PRC Press Deliveries: We have begun receiving airmail delivery of a number of important PRC papers, including GUANGMING RIBAO, GONGREN RIBAO (Workers Daily), ZHONGGUO QINGNIAN BAO (the paper of the China Youth League), and the Shanghai papers JIEFANG RIBAO and WEN WEI BAO. The availability of airmail delivery has made it possible to significantly decrease the lagtimes of these papers, to 3 days in some instances.

II. ADMINISTRATION

1. Foreign National Position Review: Consulate Personnel Officer Mary Cencetti called on the bureau on 24 February to conduct the first annual review of foreign national position classifications since the 1980 reclassification. Although there is general agreement over the inadequacy of the wage scale as far as FBIS monitors are concerned, most of the position descriptions were found to be accurate. In some cases, however, monitors had upgraded their qualifications since the original survey. This was accomplished over the past year through the bureau's Mandarin training program wherein monitors who were only doing Chinese press became qualified to do radio translations as well. We will soon be able to promote these monitors on the basis of their increased qualifications.

In some cases--notably those of the bureau's associate editor and technician--our position review did reveal inadequate position descriptions and grades. We are in the process of attempting to upgrade these positions. (AIUO)

2. Teletypist Resignation: Teletypist [] this month informed us of his intention to resign in order to accept a position in a computer training program at the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club. (The Club has become one of two biggest drains on our talent, the other being Union Carbide. If nothing else, we may have the reputation in Hong Kong of being a great place to find bright, well trained and underpaid people--clearly an example of anonymity being preferable to fame!) At this writing we may have found a replacement for Tommy, but we are of course faced with the prospect of the usual processing and training period. This is particularly disruptive now, having just hired a new teletypist a month ago and with a continuing backlog in our wireroom.

3. Monitor Illness: Monitor [] has been on sick leave for much of February, and will be so for the foreseeable future, following surgery for a detached retina. The success of the operation is questionable at this time, and we do not know when--or even if--Francis will return to work. (AIUO)

III. VISITS

1. Several members of the Consulate political section visited the

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bureau on 4 February. Following a tour of the bureau and substantive discussions on the bureau file, a hearty dim sum lunch was had by all at one of Hopewell's several Chinese restaurants.

2. AG analyst [] in Hong Kong on private travel, visited the bureau on 12 February.

3. OPA analyst [] paid a short call on the bureau, 24 February.

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

1. The bureau welcomed in the year of the rooster with a "kung hei fat choy" party on 3 February. Many of our colleagues from the other Hopewell agencies attended.

2. Yet more Hong Kong landmarks will fall to the voracious "redevelopment machine" this year. Those familiar with Hong Kong will mourn the passing by euthanasia this summer of the venerable Repulse Bay Hotel (to be replaced by three 50-story apartment complexes), the China Fleet Club (to be rebuilt), and the distinctively shaped Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank (also to be rebuilt). Money talks; tempus fugit.

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Chief, Hong Kong Bureau

Attachments:

A. Production

cc: Orig. + 3 Hqs.

Chief, Okinawa Bureau

Chief, Seoul Bureau

File